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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3981st meeting of the Security Council, held on 23 February 1999 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Tajikistan and along the Tajik-Afghan border", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan of 8 February 1999 (S/1999/124), submitted pursuant to paragraph 11 of its resolution 1206 (1998) of 12 November 1998.

"The Security Council welcomes the regular contacts between the President of the Republic of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) and the work of the Commission on National Reconciliation aimed at achieving further progress in the peace process. It regrets that that progress has remained slow during the last three months and underlines the necessity for the parties to speed up the full and sequential implementation of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan (S/1997/510), especially the Protocol on military issues (S/1997/209, annex II). The Council calls upon the parties to intensify their efforts to create conditions for the holding in 1999 of a constitutional referendum and presidential elections, as well as the timely holding of parliamentary elections.

"The Security Council notes with appreciation the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and of all the personnel of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) and encourages them to continue assisting the parties in the implementation of the General Agreement. It underlines the importance of UNMOT playing a full and active role in the implementation of the General Agreement and requests the Secretary-General to continue to consider means of achieving this taking into account the security situation.

"The Security Council welcomes the continued contribution made by the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (the CIS Peacekeeping Forces) in assisting the parties in the implementation of the General Agreement in coordination with all concerned.

"The Security Council welcomes also the contribution of the Contact Group of Guarantor States and International Organizations to the peace process and, in this context, considers that the holding of a meeting of this Group at the level of Foreign Ministers in support of the peace process could indeed be useful, if properly prepared.

"The Security Council welcomes further the activities of various internaticnal organizations and humanitarian workers related to the implementation of the General Agreement and addressing the humanitarian, rehabilitation and development needs of Tajikistan. It calls upon Member States and others concerned to respond promptly and generously to the consolidated appeal for Tajikistan for 1999 launched in Geneva in December 1998.

"The Security Council reiterates its concern that the security situation in some parts of Tajikistan remains precarious. It reiterates the importance of a full investigation into the murder in July 1998 of four members of UNMOT and takes note with appreciation of the efforts of the Government of Tajikistan in this regard. The Council calls upon the UTO to contribute more effectively to the investigation in order to bring those responsible to justice. It acknowledges the efforts of the Government of Tajikistan to enhance the protection of international personnel and calls upon the parties to cooperate further in ensuring the security and freedom of movement of the personnel of the United Nations, the CIS Peacekeeping Forces and other international personnel. The Council reminds both parties that the ability of the international community to mobilize and to continue assistance for Tajikistan is linked to the security of the personnel of UNMOT and international organizations, and of humanitarian workers."

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